

# ethical

## connections

INSTITUTE FOR  
GLOBAL ETHICS

### A Snapshot of Our Survey

- Sixty-seven percent of U.S. citizens say they can trust the government in Washington only some of the time or never.
- Seventy-two percent are “very concerned” about candidates saying one thing in campaigns and doing another when elected. Fifty-nine percent think all or most candidates deliberately twist the truth.
- Thirty-nine percent believe most or all candidates deliberately lie to voters, while a nearly equal number—42 percent—think some candidates lie.
- Forty-three percent believe most or all candidates deliberately make unfair personal attacks on their opponents, while another 45 percent think some do.

Survey conducted by Democratic pollster Celinda Lake and Republican John Deardourff and funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Visit the Project on Campaign Conduct at [www.campaignconduct.org](http://www.campaignconduct.org).

## NEW INSTITUTE POLL SHOWS CITIZENS WANT FAIR CAMPAIGNS

**D**uring the 1998 elections, a caller from Ohio phoned the Columbus office of our nonpartisan Project on Campaign Conduct to complain. “The advertising is terrible, disgusting,” said the message on our hot line. “I want to do something about it!”

Like scores of other Americans, this citizen was troubled by the growing nastiness of our nation’s political campaigns. A new poll released by the Institute in late December shows the depth of this reservoir of resentment and disgust with modern campaign ethics. (*Please see the sidebar for details.*)

To anyone concerned with the health of U.S. democracy, the poll’s results are frightening. Four out of ten Americans believe all or most political candidates lie to them. When this many people are convinced that their government routinely deceives them, we have the makings of a crisis of credibility.

But there is good news, too. Proving themselves to be less cynical and jaded than many would have us believe, Americans emphatically condemn such dishonest and unethical behavior. They have not thrown in the towel. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) strongly disagree that “getting the best results for the public justifies dishonesty.” Even more (68 percent) disagree that it is okay to say whatever is needed to get elected because “no one believes it anyway.” Put another way, Americans reject the idea that the end justifies the means.

In fact, Americans are ready and eager to hold candidates accountable for their behavior. Seventy-two percent of Americans say they would have more respect for a candidate who signed and abided by a code of conduct. Fifty-nine percent say they would vote against a candidate who signed and then broke a code. Overall, 71 percent of Americans say they would be more likely to vote in a race in which candidates have agreed to and signed a code of conduct—a number that includes 63 percent of nonregistered U.S. voters. Among other things, then, a code of conduct may be a useful way to invite disillusioned or disheartened voters back into the political process.

This year, we plan to continue our work with political candidates, encouraging them to draft, endorse, and abide by codes of conduct. We will be doing more national survey work and building local partnerships around the issue of campaign conduct. We think citizens may be able to look forward to a 2000 election cycle that will allow them to have a voice in the quality of the political discourse they hear.



## ■ Institute for Global Ethics Forges New Relationship with inc.com

In January, the Institute for Global Ethics began a new partnership with *Inc.* magazine's new Internet-based venture, inc.com. The company, headquartered in Massachusetts, is an Internet firm that serves small-business owners, entrepreneurs, and emerging companies by presenting the best Web-based applications, products, and research available to the small-business market. The company has relationships with more than 50 business and content partners, including *Inc.* magazine, all of which deliver targeted information and tools to the small-business market.

The Institute for Global Ethics has begun contributing text content to inc.com's "Doing Business Ethically" challenge area. (Visit at [www.inc.com/challenges](http://www.inc.com/challenges).) Its first contributions include nine ethical dilemmas contributed by graduates of the Institute's Ethical Fitness™ Seminars and chosen by inc.com for their relevance to the challenges of running a small or growing business.

Inc.com will be assisting the Institute for Global Ethics by promoting the Institute's *Business Ethics Newslines* service and *Navigating the Waters* CD-ROM training program to their readers around the world. They also will be featuring Rushworth Kidder's commentaries from past issues of *Newslines*.

## ■ Year 2000 Marks 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Institute



To celebrate this decade of dedication to ethics, Institute members are invited to share in our anniversary activities. In appreciation of your support of the Institute's ever-expanding work, we invite you to take part in the celebration. Among the special activities in store, members are invited to submit articles on ethics in their lives for a special anniversary edition of *Insights on Global Ethics*. Also, special 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ethical Fitness Seminars for members and their guests will be presented between May 1 and September 30 around the country. We are grateful to the volunteer trainers who will donate their time and expertise to make these seminars possible. This is your opportunity to attend an Ethical Fitness Seminar for the cost of seminar materials only! For dates and locations, see page three or visit the Members' Circle on our Web site.

### Tidbits

#### Membership Benefits Update

We are pleased to announce the following changes in your membership benefits. *Ethical Connections*, with highlights of activities at the Institute and member news, will be published four times per year. *Insights on Global Ethics* will bring you in-depth coverage of topics in ethics and Institute programs on a semiannual basis. You will continue to receive President's Letters from Rushworth Kidder, keeping you in touch with vital and cutting-edge ethics issues, four times per year. And, of course,

our members will continue to receive a 10 percent discount on all books, audiotapes, videotapes, and curricula offered by the Institute, plus a reduced rate to participate in our Ethical Fitness Seminars.



#### Graduation Time is Fast Approaching

Do you know someone who is graduating this year? A great

gift idea for anyone entering college or starting their first "real" job is a one-year membership with the Institute for Global Ethics. Making good decisions can be hard at any age, and the new graduate is going to be faced with many tough choices. Add a copy of *How Good People Make Tough Choices* to your gift and your new grad will be better prepared to face the challenges ahead. As a member, you can give a one-year gift membership for \$35.00; *Tough Choices* is \$17.95 for hardcover and \$10.80 for paperback. And it's easy to give: Call 800-729-2615, complete the online form at [www.globalethics.org](http://www.globalethics.org), or simply send an email to [ethics@globalethics.org](mailto:ethics@globalethics.org).

# Institute Blankets Country with Once-in-a-Decade Series of Ethical Fitness™ Seminars

**T**he news is too good to keep to ourselves! Starting this spring, the Institute will be offering its renowned Ethical Fitness Seminars to members and their guests. The cost for the one-day seminar is simply the cost of materials: \$25.00. Look for specific registration information in your mail, or call us at 800-729-2615.

- May 9  
Olympia, Washington
- May 12  
Memphis, Tennessee
- May 13  
Bay City, Michigan
- May 18  
Raleigh, North Carolina
- June 17  
St. Petersburg, Florida
- June 28  
Lancaster/Reading, Pennsylvania
- July 7  
Dallas, Texas
- July 14  
Indianapolis, Indiana
- July 22  
Centralia, Illinois
- August 26  
San Jose, California
- September 15  
Portsmouth, Virginia
- September 23  
Hightstown, New Jersey

## Ethics in Action

**O**ne of the most difficult tasks undertaken by a group of people, be they family, a business, or a community group, is to come to agreement on the meaning of key words. English, while an agile and flexible language, allows for much misunderstanding. Here are a few definitions that the Institute has arrived at which may be helpful to groups wrestling with certain terms:

*Ethics:* the study of standards of right and wrong behavior

*Morals:* having to do with right and wrong conduct

*Value:* that which has intrinsic worth, or a principle, standard, or quality that is worthwhile

The word many people falter on is *value*. There are many kinds of values—economic values, aesthetic values—but *moral* values tend to be distinct. They are about creating virtue, the ideal human character, the highest sense of good. Thus they tend to be intrinsic or essential, rather than instrumental or simply serving as means to an end. One might endorse the value of hard work or thriftiness, but one would not say that those are moral values. Likewise, a person without the quality of humor cannot be considered immoral, while a person without the quality of compassion might be.

*Taken from the Institute curriculum Building Decision Skills, 2nd edition, 1997*

## Staff Profile

### ■ Brad Rourke

*Vice President for Public Policy; Director, Project on Campaign Conduct*

Moving from Pasadena, California, to Camden, Maine, was the farthest thing from Brad Rourke's mind when he had a telephone conversation in May 1997 with Rushworth Kidder. Kidder's call, about the opportunity to direct a special project related to election ethics, prompted a cross-country move for Brad, his wife, and their small child a few weeks later.



Prior to the move, Brad owned a public-affairs firm in California specializing in legislative advocacy for alternative transportation. He lobbied successfully to change the state vehicle codes in all of the Pacific states. He also served on the staff of now-governor Gray Davis and was active in public affairs at all levels of government.

Now, as vice president for public policy at the Institute, Brad's most recent efforts have been directed at expanding the groundbreaking Project on Campaign Conduct, a voluntary effort to bring candidates together to draft codes of conduct, fostering better-quality campaigns. The Project also conducts national opinion polls, the most recent of which is featured on the cover of this issue.

As a strong believer in the "greatest democracy in the world," Brad believes that the most important thing anyone can do is to work in government and politics. He recognizes, however, that today not everyone feels that way. Through his work at the Institute, he feels he has been "directly able to change candidate behavior for the better and . . . to renew some citizens' trust in the process."

In addition to his hectic writing and speaking schedule, Brad serves as the acknowledged in-house computer guru at the Institute. Through it all, he still considers parenting his two young children, Carson and Daniel, his top priority. Running, backpacking, snowboarding, and reading mysteries occupy his leisure time.

## Chapter News

**MAINE:** "Is ethics a luxury?" Maine chapter members engaged in a lively discussion of this question at the late-January chapter meeting in Camden. Members drew upon the ethical dilemmas presented in the popular movie *Crimson Tide* to explore the importance of ethical values.

**ELSEWHERE,** Institute members in California and Colorado are coming together to enjoy similar group discussions and to learn more about fellow members. This brings the number of Institute chapters to four in just two years!

We are excited by members' interest in starting local chapters. For chapter guidelines, please call us at 800-729-2615 or check our Web site.

Members who wish to submit an article for *Insights on Global Ethics* on ethical decision making in their own lives are encouraged to contact us for writer's guidelines. Call 800-729-2615 or email [ethics@globalethics.org](mailto:ethics@globalethics.org).

## Snapshots from the Institute...

*Ethical dilemmas—not holiday shopping—were on the agenda for 11 members of the Institute's Maine chapter, who met in December in Castine. At the Saturday morning meeting, members discussed the ethical dimensions of a magazine article by John Vaillant, "The Ship that Vanished."*



*Teacher and Institute member Ellie Wrobel, principal Jeff Schleiger, and a few students from Los Coyotes School in La Palma, California, are pictured after winning a prestigious Golden Bell Award for the school's outstanding program emphasizing character education.*



*Ethical Fitness trainers from around the country and across the ocean gathered at the Institute for a two-day class reunion and refresher course. Rushworth Kidder, president, and other Institute staff participated in the group discussions.*

